

**Summary of Dissertation Recitals:
Notes on Three Performances**

by

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DEDICATION

To my favorite person: this one's for you, Daddy. I hope I've made you proud and that you are smiling down on us from Heaven. I love you more than more words can say. Until we meet again.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express sincere gratitude to all of my professors and mentors at the University of Michigan. Special thanks is extended to my committee chair and voice teacher, Freda Herseth, whose guidance, encouragement, compassion, and unwavering support have inspired me immeasurably. I would also like to thank all additional members who served as part of my doctoral committee for lending their expertise, guidance, and mentorship: Timothy Cheek, Colleen Conway, Carmen Pelton, Stephen Lusmann, Stephen West, and Nojin Kwak.

Profound gratitude goes to my husband, Matt Daniels, without whose love and encouragement I could not have survived. Thank you for your continuous love and inspiration, and for your relentless support of everything I do. I love you. Heartfelt gratitude is extended to my family, especially my loving mother and father, who have always encouraged and supported me in every endeavor without hesitation throughout my life. I would like to offer a very special thank you to all of my dear friends and colleagues who have supported and inspired me greatly throughout this journey.

Finally, I thank God for all of His blessings and gifts, who is with me always guiding my steps.

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ABSTRACT

Two recitals and an opera role were performed in lieu of a written dissertation. The following program notes and character analysis represent a journey through artistry, vocal scholarship, and pertinent research as a doctoral student at the University of Michigan. The two dissertation recital performances and the operatic role of *Alcina* demonstrate proficiency in a range of languages and styles, an application of vocal skill and expertise both technically and interpretatively, and a depth of understanding of the repertoire as it pertains to both style and context. The first recital included art songs that highlighted significant stylistic benchmarks of the lieder tradition including works by Louis Spohr, Clara Schumann, and Alban Berg. An analysis of the psychology of the title character of the opera *Alcina* was explored in depth as demonstrated in the magical setting and the musical palette of George Frideric Handel. The music of Spanish and Italian composers was presented in the second dissertation recital, “Music of My Heritage” which featured music by Fernando Obradors, Enrique Granados, Giuseppe Verdi, Gioachino Rossini, Gaetano Donizetti, and Vincenzo Bellini. Recital 1: “An Evening of German Lieder.” November 10, 2019, 6:00 pm, Britton Recital Hall, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Bernard Tan, piano. Recital 2: “Music of my Heritage: A Recital of Spanish and Italian Music.” March 13, 2020, 5:30 pm, Britton Recital Hall, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Bernard Tan, piano. Recital 3: The title role in the opera *Alcina* by George Frideric Handel. March 29 and 31, 2019, Lydia Mendelssohn Theater, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Grant Preisser, director; Stephanie Rhodes Russell, conductor.

RECITAL 1 PROGRAM

An Evening of German Lieder

Rose Mannino, Soprano
Bernard Tan, Piano
Elisha Willinger, Clarinet

Sunday, November 10, 2019
Britton Recital Hall
6:00 P.M.

Sechs Deutsche Lieder, Op.103

Louis Spohr (1784-1859)

Sei still mein Herz
Zwiegesang
Sehnsucht
Wiegenlied in drei Tönen
Das heimliche Lied
Wach auf

Elisha Willinger, Clarinet

Intermission

Ich stand in dunklen Träumen
Liebst du um Schönheit
Er ist gekommen in Sturm und Regen

Clara Schumann (1819-1896)

Sieben Frühe Lieder

Alban Berg (1885-1935)

Nacht
Schilflied
Die Nachtigall
Traumgekrönt
Im Zimmer
Liebesode
Sommertage

RECITAL 1 PROGRAM NOTES

“An Evening of German Lieder” Program Notes

Louis Spohr was a composer, violinist, and conductor born in Brunswick, Germany in 1784. Spohr’s musical interests and abilities emerged early in life. He began taking violin lessons as a young boy and later attended college where he continued his studies in violin, theory, and composition. Beginning in 1799, under the patronage of the Duke of Brunswick, Spohr performed operas and chamber music by such composers as Cherubini, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven—music that would have a considerable impact on his own compositional voice. In 1802 by the age of 18, the Duke found Spohr ready to further his studies and facilitated a one-year concert tour through Europe culminating in St. Petersburg, Russia with the violin virtuoso Franz Anton Eck, with whom Spohr also studied both violin and composition privately. Spohr returned to Brunswick not only a virtuoso violinist, but also a fine composer. His career was marked by a breadth of musical experience, including travel and performance tours through Germany, Vienna, Switzerland, Italy, and Paris.¹

Spohr’s compositional output spans a wide variety of genres. Early in his career, he mainly composed works for his primary instrument: violin concertos, string quartets, and string duets. His later output included other types of works, specifically, clarinet concertos, operas, lieder, symphonies, and oratorio. He also gained a reputation for being a prominent violin teacher,

¹ Clive Brown, "Spohr, Louis," *Grove Music Online*, <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000026446>, accessed October 9, 2019.

training many leading violinists of the time, and in 1831, began writing his *Violinschule*, which became one of the most widely respected violin method books of the century. Spohr also came to be known as an innovator. He is credited for pioneering the use of the conducting baton and inventing both the violin chin-rest and the rehearsal letter.²

Spohr's compositional style has been described as a merging of characteristics from distinct musical eras. Specifically, his compositions contain both the clarity and form of the classical era and the rich harmonic language and structural experimentation of 19th century Romanticism.³ His works were seen by many of his contemporaries as highly influential in the German musical sphere, yet he was often criticized for self-repetition and for the lack of stylistic or formal invention or development across his output. Another factor which may have interfered with his rise to popularity was his contemporaneous emergence amongst renowned composers of the classical and romantic eras including, Mozart, Mendelsohn, Beethoven, and Wagner. Still, Spohr was considered the greatest German violinist of his time, and his *Violincchule* remains standard pedagogical literature. The *Sechs Deutsche Lieder* were written in 1837, during which time he also wrote an additional 40 Lieder and duets. All of the texts from this set are strophic with slight variances in melody or rhythm in an effort to adapt to the prose. The harmony is primarily diatonic; however, Spohr interpolates harmonic colors from the romantic tradition, including diminished chords, augmented sixth chords, and other poignant chromaticism.⁴ Spohr was aware of his proclivity to repeat similar musical gestures and harmonic structures; thus, he sought to vary his works by experimenting with different combinations of instruments and textures. The *Sechs Duetsche Lieder*, scored for soprano, piano, and clarinet, is a prime example

² Ibid.

³ Clive Brown, "Spohr, Louis," *Grove Music Online*.

⁴ Henry Pleasants, ed., *The Musical Journeys of Louis Spohr*, v.

of this. Despite Spohr's limited compositional language, they were enthusiastically received by audiences and critics alike. These pieces exemplify Spohr's expert writing for both the piano and clarinet, effectively achieving an appealing variety of textures amongst the three instruments.⁵ Additionally, they combine formal clarity, melodic beauty, and a rich harmonic palate, achieving a nuanced simplicity which make these often-overlooked pieces a worthy contribution to the lieder canon. While largely overlooked as a prominent figure in the development of European music, upon further examination, Spohr's significance as a teacher, violinist, composer, and an innovator is irrefutable.

Sechs Deutsche Lieder

Sei still mein Herz

(Karl Friedrich, Freiherr von Schweitzer)

Ich wahrte die Hoffnung tief in der Brust,
Die sich ihr vertrauend erschlossen,
Mir strahlten die Augen voll Lebenslust,
Wenn mich ihre Zauber umflossen,
Wenn ich ihrer schmeichelnden Stimme gelauscht,
Im Wettersturm ist ihr Echo verlauscht,
Sei still mein Herz, und denke nicht dran,
Das ist nun die Wahrheit, das Andre war Wahn.

Die Erde lag vor mir im Frühlingstraum,
Den Licht und Wärme durchglühte,
Und wonnetrunken durchwallt ich den Raum,
Der Brust entsproßte die Blüte,
Der Liebe Lenz war in mir erwacht,
Mich durch rieselt Frost,
in der Seele ist Nacht.
Sei still mein Herz, und denke nicht dran,
Das ist nun die Wahrheit, das Andre war Wahn.

Ich baute von Blumen und Sonnenglanz
Eine Brücke mir durch das Leben,
Auf der ich wandelnd im Lorbeerkranz
Mich geweiht dem hochedelsten Streben,
Der Menschen Dank war mein schönster Lohn,
Laut auf lacht die Menge mit frechem Hohn,

Be still my heart

I nursed the hope deep in my heart,
That you were true.
The eyes shone on me tilled with life's joy
Their magic flowed over me.
When I listened to your flattering voice
Its echo was lost to the storm.
Be still, my heart, do not think of it,
For this is the truth, the rest was a delusion.

The earth lay before me in the glory of spring
With its light and warmth glowing
Drunk with joy, I paced about
With my blossoming heart:
Love's spring was awakened in me
But frost rippled through me,
bringing night to my soul.
Be still, my heart, do not think of it,
For this is the truth, the rest was a delusion.

Out of sunshine and flowers
I built myself a bridge through life
I wandered across it with a laurel wreath.
Dedicated to the noblest aspirations,
Man's gratitude was my finest reward;
Who only now laughed in derision.

⁵ Clive Brown, *Louis Spohr: A Critical Biography*, 237-238.

Sei still mein Herz, und denke nicht dran,
Das ist nun die Wahrheit, das Andre war Wahn.

Zwiegesang

(Robert Reinick)

Im Fliederbusch ein Vöglein saß
In der stillen, schönen Maiennacht,
Darunter ein Mägdlein im hohen Gras
In der stillen, schönen Maiennacht.
Sang Mägdlein, hielt das Vöglein Ruh',
Sang Vöglein, hört' das Mägdlein zu,
Und weithin klang der Zwiegesang
Das mondbeglänzte Tal entlang.

Was sang das Vöglein im Gezweig
Durch die stille, schöne Maiennacht?
Was sang doch wohl das Mägdlein gleich
Durch die stille, schöne Maiennacht?
Von Frühlingssonne das Vögelein,
Von Liebeswonne das Mägdlein.
Wie der Gesang zum Herzen drang
Vergess ich nimmer mein Lebelang.

Sehnsucht

(Emanuel von Geibel)

Ich blick' in mein Herz und ich blick' in die Welt,
Bis vom Auge die brennende Träne mir fällt,
Wohl leuchtet die Ferne mit goldenem Licht,
Doch hält mich der Nord, ich erreiche sie nicht.
O die Schranken so eng,
Und die Welt so weit,
Und so flüchtig die Zeit!

Ich- weiß ein Land, wo aus sonnigem Grün,
Um versunkene Tempel die Trauben glühn,
Wo die purpurne Woge das Ufer beschäumt,
Und von kommenden Sängern der Lorbeer träumt.
Fern lockt es und winkt dem verlangenden Sinn,
Und ich kann nicht hin!

O hätt' ich Flügel, durch's Blau der Luft
Wie wollt' ich baden im Sonnenduft!
Doch umsonst!
Und Stunde auf Stund' entflieht
Vertraure die Jugend, begrabe das Lied!
O die Schranken so eng,
und die Welt so weit,
Und so flüchtig die Zeit!

Be still, my heart, do not think of it,
For this is the truth, the rest was a delusion.

The Twin Song

A small bird sat in the lilac bush,
In the quiet, beautiful May evening.
Below sat a maiden in the high grass,
In the quiet, beautiful May evening.
While the maiden sang, the bird was mute
While the bird sang, the maiden listened.
Their song rose
Throughout the moonlit valley.

What did the bird sing of
Through the quiet, beautiful May evening?
What did the maiden sing of
Through the quiet, beautiful May evening?
The bird sang of the spring sun.
The maiden, of love's bliss.
How their song pierced my hear,
I will never forget for the rest of my life

Longing

I look in my heart and I look in the sky
Until tears fall from my brimming eyes.
The horizon is shining with golden light,
Yet the north has hold of me; I cannot reach it.
Oh, the confining boundaries,
And the world so wide,
And time is fleeting.

I know a land where the sun gleams
And the vine ripens by a sunken temple
Where the purple waves foam onto the beach
And laurels dream of serenaders
It lures from afar and beckons my longing soul,
And I cannot go!

O had I wings to soar through the blue sky.
To bathe in the sun's fragrance.
Yet in vain!
Hour flees upon hour
Mourning youth and burying the muse.
Oh, the confining boundaries
And the world so wide,
And time is fleeting!

Weigenlied

(August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben)

Alles still in süßer Ruh,
Drum, mein Kind, so schlaf auch du!
Draußen säuselt nur der Wind:
Su, susu! schlaf ein, mein Kind!

Schließ du deine Äugelein,
Laß sie wie zwei Knospen sein!
Morgen, wenn die Sonn' erglüht,
Sind sie wie die Blum' erblüht.

Und die Blümlein schau' ich an,
Und die Äuglein küß' ich dann,
Und der Mutter Herz vergißt,
Daß es draußen Frühling ist.

Das heimliche Lied

(Ernst Koch)

Es gibt geheime Schmerzen,
Sie klaget nie der Mund,
Getragen tief im Herzen
Sind sie der Welt nicht kund.
Es gibt ein heimlich Sehnen,
Das scheuet stets das Licht,
Es gibt verborgne Tränen,
Der Fremde sieht sie nicht.

Es gibt ein still Versinken
In eine innre Welt,
Wo Friedensauen winken,
Von Sternenglanz erhellt,
Wo auf gefallen Schranken
Die Seele Himmel baut,
Und jubelnd den Gedanken
Den Lippen anvertraut.

Es gibt ein still Vergehen
In stummen, öden Schmerz,
Und Niemand darf es sehen,
Das schmergepreßte Herz.
Es sagt nicht was ihm fehlet,
Und wenn's im Grame bricht,
Verblutend und zerquälet,
Der Fremde sieht sie nicht.
Es gibt einen sanften Schlummer,
Wo süßer Frieden weilt,

Cradlesong

Everything is quietly resting,
So should you also rest now, my child.
Only the wind is gently blowing.
Sh, Sh, Sh, go to sleep, my child!

Close your little eyes,
Let them be like little buds.
Tomorrow when the sun shines
They will bloom again.

And I'll look at the flowers
And will kiss the eyes.
And mother's heart will forget
That spring is outside.

The secret song

There are secret sorrows
Of which we never complain.
Carried deep in the heart
So the world has no knowledge of them.
There are secret longings
Which shun the light
And hidden tears
That the stranger does not see.

There is a sinking feeling
Into a world within,
Where peaceful star-studded
meadows beckon.
Where, with barriers broken,
The soul may be rebuilt by heaven
and joyful thanks
Will fill our mouths.

There is still withdrawal
In silent, empty pain
And nobody may see
The deeply wounded heart;
It doesn't confess what is ailing it
And whether it grieves.
Torn and suffering,
The stranger does not see it.
There is a soft slumber,
Where sweet peace rests,

Wo stille Ruh' den Kummer
Der müden Seele heilt.
Doch gibt's ein schöner Hoffen,
Das Welten überfliegt,
Da wo am Herzen offen
Das Herz voll Liebe liegt.

Wach auf

(Anonymous)

Was stehst du bange und sinnest nach?
Ach! schon so lange ist Liebe wach.
Hörst du das Klingen allüberall?
Die Vöglein singen mit süßem Schall.
Aus Starrem sprießt
Baumblättlein weich,
Das Leben fließet
Um Ast und Zweig.

Das Tröpflein schlüpfet
aus Waldesschacht,
Das Bächlein hüpfet mit Wallungsmacht.
Der Himmel neiget in's Wellenklar,
Die Bläue zeigt sich wunderbar.

Ein heit'res Schwingen
Zu Form und Klang,
Ein ew'ges Fügen
Im ew'gen Drang!

Was stehst du bange und sinnest nach?
Ach! schon so lange ist Liebe wach!

Where the heartache
In the tired soul is cured.
And there is a wonderful hope
That flies over the world
That if a heart is open to it,
The heart will be filled with love.

Wake up

Why are you standing there so long,
contemplating?
Ah, love has been awake for so long!
Do you hear its echoes everywhere?
The birds sing sweetly,
The trees are budding
And life springs from the branches.
Life is flowing
through bough and twig.

Little drops are gliding from the forest hollows,
The brook dances with abundant strength.
The heavens bow towards the clear waves,
The blueness is wondrous.

A bright flourish
of shape and sound,
An endless yielding
to endless impulse.

Why are you standing there so sad,
contemplating?
Ah, love has been awake for so long!

Translations by Freda Herseth, from the CD, *Of Shepherds, Romance, and Love* & Emily Ezust, taken from www.lieder.net

Clara Wieck Schumann was a virtuoso pianist, talented composer, and teacher who was born in Leipzig in 1819. Clara began studying piano formally at a young age under the tutelage and guidance of her father, and later manager, Friedrich Wieck. She made her public debut at the age of 9 and wrote her first composition, a set of four polonaises, by the age of 11. She became the first woman to achieve an international reputation as a concert pianist performing concerts in almost every influential country in Europe including Germany, France, Austria, England,

Belgium, Denmark, Switzerland, and Russia. By the time she met her husband Robert Schumann, Wieck had already earned a reputation as a distinguished virtuoso pianist. Protestations from Clara's father about her union to Schumann resulted in a long, strenuous court battle. Ultimately, the court ruled his objections to their marriage frivolous and unsubstantiated, and the couple finally married in 1840.⁶ Throughout their lives, their music was a source of mutual inspiration, as they composed together and for one another often. When writing songs for Clara, Robert took great care in capturing her temperament – even fashioning a motive specifically to represent Clara, which he often infused throughout his compositions. Clara also valued the importance of interpreting and championing her husband's works, disseminating his works to European audiences during performances. In fact, Schumann's works might have remained unknown far longer had she not dedicated herself to this endeavor.⁷

Clara composed 28 Lieder, 18 of which are published. They represent an expressive and passionate body of songs which beautifully capture poetic settings and are characterized by lyric, passionate piano accompaniments rich in texture and virtuosic brilliance. “Liebst du um Schönheit” (1841) and “Er ist gekommen in Sturm und Regen” (1836) are both part of her first publication, *Liebesfrühling*, a collection of songs based on poetry by Freidrich Rückert. This publication was a joint project between Clara and Robert – though some of Clara's compositions were not correctly attributed to her.⁸ “Ich stand in dunklen Träumen” was written between 1840-43 and was gifted to Robert on their first Christmas together. The two songs from the Rückert collection are contrasting in compositional style. “Liebst du um Schönheit” is a simple yet extremely well-crafted piece that depicts Rückert's words with rhythmic clarity and expressive

⁶ Berthold Litzmann, *Letters of Clara Schumann and Johannes Brahms*, viii.

⁷ Nancy B. Reich, *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman*, 257.

⁸ Nancy B. Reich, *Clara Schumann : The Artist and the Woman*, 257.

beauty.⁹ “Er ist gekommen” imbues a sparking virtuosity in the piano accompaniment, whose rhapsodic and exhilarating figures capture the storm and rain which envelop the recounting of the passionate love story.

Clara Schumann was a woman who throughout her life remained focused and dedicated to her art and her love. She never relinquished her performance career (even through 8 pregnancies), contributed a formidable body of work to German music and the *Lied* tradition, and later became the principal piano teacher at the Hoch University in Frankfurt.¹⁰ She was a gifted, ambitious, and driven woman who sought to strike an appropriate balance between career and personal life, both of which were of utmost importance to her. She managed all of these successfully and accomplished many ‘firsts’ as a woman and musician in her lifetime – setting the stage for the talented and capable women who followed in her dazzling footsteps.

Liebst du um Schönheit
(Friedrich Rückert)

Liebst du um Schönheit,
O nicht mich liebe!
Liebe die Sonne,
Sie trägt ein gold’nes Haar!

Liebst du um Jugend,
O nicht mich liebe!
Liebe den Frühling,
Der jung ist jedes Jahr!

Liebst du um Schätze,
O nicht mich liebe!
Liebe die Meerfrau,
Sie hat viel Perlen klar!
Liebst du um Liebe,
O ja, mich liebe!
Liebe mich immer,
Dich lieb’ ich immerdar!

If you love for beauty

If you love for beauty,
O love not me!
Love the sun,
She has golden hair!

If you love for youth,
O love not me!
Love the spring
Who is young each year!

If you love for riches,
O love not me!
Love the mermaid
Who has many shining pearls!
If you love for love,
Oh yes, love me!
Love me always;
I shall love you forever!

⁹ Nancy B Reich. “Schumann [née Wieck], Clara (Josephine),” *Grove Music Online*, <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000025152>, accessed October 17, 2019.

¹⁰ Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*, 92.

Ich stand in dunklen Träumen

(Heinrich Heine)

Ich stand in dunklen Träumen
Und starrte ihr Bildnis an,
Und das geliebte Antlitz
Heimlich zu leben begann.
Um ihre Lippen zog sich
Ein Lächeln wunderbar,
Und wie von Wehmutstränen
Erglänzte ihr Augenpaar.
Auch meine Tränen flossen
Mir von den Wangen herab –
Und ach, ich kann's nicht glauben,
Dass ich dich verloren hab!

Er ist gekommen in Sturm und Regen

(Friedrich Rückert)

Er ist gekommen in Sturm und Regen,
Ihm schlug beklommen mein Herz entgegen.
Wie konnt' ich ahnen, dass seine Bahnen
Sich einen sollten meinen Wegen?

Er ist gekommen in Sturm und Regen,
Er hat genommen
Mein Herz verwegen.

Nahm er das meine?
Nahm ich das seine?
Die beiden kamen sich entgegen.

Er ist gekommen in Sturm und Regen,
Nun ist gekommen des Frühlings Segen.
Der Freund zieht weiter,
Ich seh' es heiter,
Denn er bleibt mein auf allen Wegen.

I stood darkly dreaming

I stood darkly dreaming
And stared at her picture,
And that beloved face
Sprang mysteriously to life.
About her lips
A wondrous smile played,
And as with sad tears,
Her eyes gleamed.
And my tears flowed
Down my cheeks,
And ah, I cannot believe
That I have lost you!

He came in storm and rain

He came in storm and rain;
My anxious heart beat against his.
How could I have known that his path
Should unite itself with mine?

He came in storm and rain;
Audaciously
He took my heart.

Did he take mine?
Did I take his?
Both drew near to each other.

He came in storm and rain.
Now spring's blessing has come.
My friend journeys on,
I watch with good cheer,
For he shall be mine wherever he goes.

Translations by Richard Stokes, taken from www.oxfordlieder.co.uk

Austrian composer **Alban Berg** was born in Vienna in 1885. He began composing at the age of 15, writing an impressive seventy songs by the age of only 20. A pupil of Arnold Schoenberg, Berg became known as one of three composers of the Second Viennese School; of

this group, his music is the most oft performed largely due to Berg's choice of harmonic and melodic language and his penchant for evoking emotional intensity, which harken back to romantic music more than that of his colleagues. After the decline of the nineteenth century German *Lied* tradition, Berg continued to expand and develop the composition of song throughout his career. His music (particularly his earlier compositions) evoke the sentiments of late-nineteenth century romanticism.¹¹ His most noted attribute as a composer was his ability to unite the idioms of atonal and serial music with lyricism and romanticism which made his compositions easily assimilated and enjoyed. For this reason, he was often admired as "the poet of the atonal."¹² Berg's amalgamation of the traditional and new styles engendered criticism and even dismissal from both composers and analysts, earning him the reputation of being "more artist than doctrinaire."¹³ Nonetheless, Alban Berg produced one of the richest bodies of music in the 20th century. The *Sieben Frühe Lieder*, are among his earliest compositions, written between 1905–1908 written originally for voice and piano and later revised for voice and orchestra. This set of songs reveals the impact of both Schoenberg's teachings as well as a look back to the Romantic *Lied*, particularly the songs of Schumann, Wolf, and Strauss. In these pieces, Berg utilizes two compositional devices to evoke a sense of melodic or harmonic ambiguity: through the use of the whole-tone scale and the use of superimposed perfect fourths or augmented fourths in both melodic and harmonic contexts and in various permutations. The resulting ambiguity is typically resolved in each piece by an eventual transition into a more diatonic context.¹⁴ The first song of the set, "Nacht" exemplifies this technique, as its opening lines unfold various segments of a whole-tone scale, evoking an ethereal and almost ominous obscurity before

¹¹ Douglas Jarman, *The Music of Alban Berg*, 1-2.

¹² Carol Kimball. *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*, 144-146.

¹³ Douglas Jarman, 2.

¹⁴ Douglas Jarman, *The Music of Alban Berg*, 221.

ultimately coalescing into a diatonic resolution. “Im Zimmer” and “Die Nachtigall” were two of his earliest contributions to this set, “Im Zimmer” being the first written in 1905. Both songs demonstrate the influence of nineteenth-century German *lieder* and exhibit a skillfully integrated relationship between voice and piano and an evocative melodic and pianistic style. “Die Nachtigall” quickly became one of his most enticing and well-known pieces displaying a melody and sweeping accompaniment full of passionate lyricism.¹⁵ In both “Liebesode” and “Traumegkrönt,” Berg utilizes repetitive melodic or rhythmic motives as a cohesive device. Distinct, often short, musical gestures are developed skillfully, which display a masterful thematic development that looks forward to Berg’s mature compositional style.¹⁶

In closing, these early songs are perhaps the most quintessentially representative of Berg’s distinct ability to meld atonal with traditional romantic idioms in a unique and highly appealing manner – exemplifying passionate lyricism enriched by a distinctive harmonic palate – earning them a noteworthy place in the 20th century song canon.

Sieben Frühe Lieder

Nacht

(Carl Hauptman)

Dämmern Wolken über Nacht und Tal,
Nebel schweben. Wasser rauschen sacht.
Nun entschleiert sich's mit einem Mal:
O gib acht! gib acht!

Weites Wunderland ist aufgetan,
Silbern ragen Berge traumhaft gross,
Stille Pfade silberlicht
Talan aus verborg'nem Schoss.
Und die hehre Welt so traumhaft rein.
Stummer Buchenbaum am Wege steht
Schattenschwarz:

Night

The clouds embrown the night and valley;
the mists float above, the water rushing gently.
Now all at once they unveil themselves:
O listen! pay heed!

A broad land of wonder has opened up.
Silver mountains rise up, fantastically huge,
quiet paths lit with silver
lead toward the valley from some hidden place;
and the noble world is so dreamily pure.
A mute beech stands by the path,
black with shadows;

¹⁵ Douglas Jarman. Alban Berg (Maria Johanness), *Grove Music Online*.
<https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000002767> (accessed October 12, 2019), accessed April 22, 2013.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Ein Hauch vom fernen Hain
einsam leise weht

Und aus tiefen Grundes Dürsterheit
Blinken Lichter auf in stummer Nacht.
Trinke Seele! trinke Einsamkeit!
O gib acht! gib acht!

Shilflied

(Nikolaus Lenau)

Auf geheimem Waldespfade
Schleich' ich gern im Abendschein
An das öde Schilfgestade,
Mädchen, und gedenke dein!

Wenn sich dann der Busch verdüstert,
Rauscht das Rohr geheimnisvoll,
Und es klaget und es flüstert,
Daß ich weinen, weinen soll.

Und ich mein', ich höre wehen
Leise deiner Stimme Klang,
Und im Weiher untergehen
Deinen lieblichen Gesang.

Die Nachtigall

(Theodor Storm)

Das macht, es hat die Nachtigall
Die ganze Nacht gesungen;
Da sind von ihrem süßen Schall,
Da sind in Hall und Widerhall
Die Rosen aufgesprungen.

Sie war doch sonst ein wildes Blut,
Nun geht sie tief in Sinnen,
Trägt in der Hand den Sommerhut
Und duldet still der Sonne Glut
Und weiß nicht was beginnen.

Das macht, es hat die Nachtigall
Die ganze Nacht gesungen;
Da sind von ihrem süßen Schall,
Da sind in Hall und Widerhall
Die Rosen aufgesprungen.

A breeze from a distant, lonely grove
wafts gently by.

And from the deep darkness of the valley
flash lights in the silent night.
Drink, my soul! Drink in this solitude!
O listen! pay heed!

Reedsong

Along a secret forest path
I like to creep in the evening light;
I go to the desolate, reedy banks,
and think, my maiden, of you!

As the bushes grow dark,
the reeds hiss mysteriously,
and lament and whisper,
and thus, I have to weep and weep.

And I think that I hear wafting
the gentle sound of your voice,
and down into the pond sinks
your lovely song.

The Nightingale

It happened because the nightingale
sang the whole night long;
from her sweet call,
from the echo and re-echo,
roses have sprung up.

She was but recently a wild blossom,
and now she walks, deep in thought;
she carries her summer hat in her hand,
enduring quietly the heat of the sun,
knowing not what to begin.

It happened because the nightingale
sang the whole night long;
from her sweet call,
from the echo and re-echo,
roses have sprung up.

Traumgekrönt

(Rainer Maria Rilke)

Das war der Tag
der weißen Chrysanthemen,
Mir bangte fast vor seiner Pracht...
Und dann, dann kamst du mir
die Seele nehmen
Tief in der Nacht.
Mir war so bang,
und du kamst lieb und leise,
Ich hatte grad im Traum an dich gedacht.
Du kamst, und leis' wie eine Märchenweise
Erklang die Nacht.

Im Zimmer

(Johannes Schlaf)

Herbstsonnenschein
Der liebe Abend blickt so still herein.
Ein Feuerlein rot
Knistert im Ofenloch und loht.
So, mein Kopf auf deinen Knie'n,
So ist mir gut.
Wenn mein Auge so in deinem ruht,
Wie leise die Minuten zieh'n.

Liebesode

(Otto Erich Hartleben)

Im Arm der Liebe schliefen wir selig ein,
Am offenen Fenster lauschte der Sommerwind,
Und unsrer Atemzüge Frieden
Trug er hinaus in die helle Mondnacht.

Und aus dem Garten
tastete zagend sich
Ein Rosenduft an unserer Liebe Bett
Und gab uns wundervolle Träume,
Träume des Rausches –
so reich an Sehnsucht!

Sommertage

(Paul Hohenberg)

Nun ziehen Tage über die Welt,
Gesandt aus blauer Ewigkeit,
Im Sommerwind verweht die Zeit.
Nun windet nächtens der Herr
Sternenkränze mit seliger Hand
Über Wander- und Wunderland.

Crowned Dream

That was the day
of white chrysanthemums;
I almost trembled before its glory...
And then, then you came to me
to take my soul
Deep in the night.
I felt so anxious,
and you came so lovingly and gently;
I had just been thinking about you in a dream.
You came, and softly, like a fairy tale,
the night resounded.

In the Chamber

Autumn sunlight.
The lovely evening peers so quietly in.
A little red fire
crackles in the stove and flares up.
And with my head upon your knee,
I am contented.
When my eyes rest in yours,
how gently do the minutes pass!

Ode to Love

In the arms of love we fell blissfully asleep;
at the open window the summer wind listened
and carried the peacefulness of our breath
out into the bright, moonlit night.

And out of the garden,
feeling its way randomly,
the scent of roses came to our bed of love
and gave us wonderful dreams,
dreams of intoxication,
rich with yearning.

Summer Days

Now the days drag through the world,
sent forth from blue eternity;
time dissipates in the summer wind.
Now at night the Lord weaves
with blessed hand wreaths of stars

above the wandering wonderland.

O Herz, was kann in diesen Tagen
Dein hellstes Wanderlied denn sagen
Von deiner tiefen, tiefen Lust:
Im Wiesensang verstummt die Brust,
Nun schweigt das Wort, wo Bild um Bild
Zu dir zieht und dich ganz erfüllt.

In these days, o my heart, what can
your brightest wanderer's song then say
about your deep, deep pleasure?
In meadow song the heart falls silent;
now there are no words, and image upon image
visits you and fills you entirely.

Translations by Emily Ezust, taken from www.lieder.net.

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RECITAL 2 PROGRAM

The Music of My Heritage: A Recital of Spanish and Italian Song

Rose Mannino, Soprano
Bernard Tan, Piano

Friday, March 13, 2020
Britton Recital Hall / 5:30 P.M.

Selections from *Canciones Clásicas Españolas*

Fernando Obradors (1897-1945)

La mia sola, Laureola
Al amor
¿Corazón, por qué pasáis?
El majo celoso
Del cabello mas sutil
Chiquitita la novia

Selections from *Tonadillas al estilo antiguo*

Enrique Granados (1867-1916)

Amor y odio
El majo timido
El mirar de la maja
El tra-la-la y el punteado
El majo discreto

Intermission

Amore e morte
Vanne, o rosa fortunata
L'abbandono

Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848)
Vincenzo Bellini (1801-1835)

La Partenza
L'invito
Perduta ho la pace

Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)
Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)

Sin tu amor

Miguel Sandoval (1903-1953)

RECITAL 2 PROGRAM NOTES

Music of My Heritage: A Recital of Spanish and Italian Song Program Notes

The music presented in this recital is a representation of my own culture and heritage. It includes repertoire that is dear to my heart, joining my love and affinity for both Spanish and Italian art song. In preparing this program, I have chosen pieces that hold a special place in my journey of singing and exploration of song. The characteristics of these songs exemplify the quintessential sound of each culture. The flourishes, melismatic passages, and unique scales exhibited in the songs of Spain embody the distinctive sounds of the Spanish musical tradition. In my very early years of study, the various collections of *bel canto* song, *Composizioni da Camera*, were gifted to me by my first voice teacher, who encouraged me to delve into this repertoire as I progressed in my singing career. The Italian compositions I am presenting this evening demonstrate the purity, legato, and expressive style of the *bel canto* era, as well as the drama and passion of the operatic style. As Graham Johnson eloquently stated, “a song is...but a tiny but potent fragment of the land which gave it birth, a cultural stock cube of concentrated strength, and handy for export.”¹⁷

The music of Spain is rooted in traditions that date back many centuries and are entrenched in many different idioms. The development of Spanish solo song has been influenced throughout history in many of the same ways as song traditions in England, Italy, Germany, and France. Beginning in the sixteenth century, solo song was typically accompanied by a *vihuela*, or a plucked viol. This pairing of voice and stringed instrument is similar to the lute songs of Elizabethan England. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the influence of Italian opera

¹⁷ Jacqueline Cockburn and Richard Stokes, *The Spanish Song Companion*, Great Britain: The Spartan Press Ltd, 1992, 20.

gave rise to various theatrical forms including the *zarzuela*, a genre akin to opera which was composed and performed mainly for the aristocracy, as well as the *tonadilla escenica* (stage *tonadilla*) which began as a light-natured solo song interpolated between larger theatrical works. Although, the *tonadilla escenica* essentially disappeared by the early nineteenth century, its style and content, which concerned the working-class life of the proud *majos* and *majas*, became a source of inspiration for poets and musicians and influenced Spanish vocal music significantly.

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Spanish music was influenced by both the microtonal ornamentation that originated in the Moorish tradition, as well as unique rhythms of the traditional dance idioms that emerged in Spain such as the *fandango*, *flamenco*, *jota*, *polo*, and *seguidilla*. Eventually, the *vihuela* was replaced by the guitar as the accompanying instrument of choice and its figurations became the traits and qualities that we recognize as the distinctive Spanish sound. The music of Spain offers a rich palette full of distinct colors. Each region brings its own flavor and style, and interpreters of this music should be particularly mindful of these distinctions, as each style's unique qualities are essential to the authentic performance of the repertoire.¹⁸

Composer and conductor Fernando Obradors was born in Barcelona, a province of Catalonia located in northeastern Spain. He was taught piano by his mother and was largely self-taught in harmony, counterpoint, and composition. In addition to his studies in Spain, Obradors also studied in Paris. He later became the conductor of the *Gran Canaria Philharmonic Orchestra* in Spain and also taught at *Las Palmas Conservatory*. He is best known for his *Canciones clásicas españolas* (1921–41), four volumes of arrangements of Spanish poetry, and

¹⁸ Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song and Literature*, Wisconsin: Hal Leonard, 2005, 495.

particularly for the first volume, which is a collection or cycle of songs. In addition to classic Spanish song, Obradors also wrote several *zarzuelas* and other symphonic works. The songs that comprise the *Canciones clásicas españolas* are tuneful, charming, and offer vocal and pianistic challenges. They are influenced by both folk song and *tonadilla* and utilize text that range from early fifteenth century verse to eighteenth and nineteenth century popular poetry. The subjects of the songs focus primarily on the themes of love and romance, encompassing a wide range of sentiments including chivalrous love, new and passionate love, pain and desire over lost love, and coquettish flirtation. Obradors utilizes a variety of distinct musical devices that brilliantly capture the atmosphere of each text. His musical style is imbued with folk idioms, sweeping romanticism, as well as characteristics that embody the Spanish sound. The first song, “La mi sola, Laureola,” with poetry by Juan Ponce, features characters from a fifteenth century *novela sentimental* (sentimental novel), “Cárcel de amor.” The text is a declaration of chivalrous love told from the perspective of the captive Leriano, the victim of the unrequited love of princess, Laureola. The song’s opening line is an unaccompanied ascending melody that encompasses a wide vocal range, and is repeated after the first verse, representing a lonely and haunting plea on the text, “La mi sola, Laureola.” He composes an extended fugal piano interlude and postlude, skillfully evoking an atmosphere of antiquity by setting a medieval scene of chivalry, elegance, and restraint. “Del cabello mas sutil” demonstrates Obradors’ ability to capture effusive romance displayed with tenderness and a vulnerable simplicity, composing an accompaniment of flourishing arpeggiation which underpins a stunningly beautiful vocal melody. The setting of the final song of the set, “Chiquitita la novia”, is a quintessential example of Andalusian classical music, which comprises an assortment of traditional musical genres that originate in this territory of southern Spain. The classic sound is encapsulated within a fiery and virtuosic piano

introduction that exemplifies the musical traditions of nineteenth century *flamenco*. The vocal line begins with an melismatic exclamation on the syllable “ay,” a common device found in the *cante jondo* style through which the singer intones before singing the text. This melismatic vocal line features the lowered second scale degree, approximating the microtonal ornamentations that are characteristic of the *cante jondo* and are derived from the influence of the Arabian, Indian, and Oriental chants.¹⁹ The text of this folk song describes a tiny bride and tiny groom and all of the equally tiny objects that will fill their home once they are married. This virtuosic and show-stopping piece is equally challenging and impressive for both the piano and voice and is one of Obradors’ most popular and recognizable compositions.

Enrique Granados was born in Leida, Spain. As a young man, he studied piano in Barcelona and in 1887 went to Paris to continue his studies with Paris Conservatoire professor, Charles-Wilfrid de Bériot, whose mother shared ancestry with the soprano Maria Malibran. He enjoyed his first musical successes after returning from Barcelona in the late 1890s with the opera *María del Carmen*. Other compositions include zarzuelas and piano suites; his most well-known, *Goyescas*, is a collection of six pieces inspired by the paintings of nineteenth-century Spanish artist Francisco Goya, who was regarded as the most popular and influential artist of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. His fascination with Goya’s work led Granados to be drawn to the era of the great *tonadillas* of eighteenth-century Madrid, which inspired the composition of a set of songs named, *Tonadillas en estilo antiguo* featuring poetry by Fernando Periquet. The *majos* and *majas* that became the subject of both poetry and prose, were people from the lower classes of society, especially in the *Lavapiés* region of Madrid. They

¹⁹ Martha Elliot, *Singing in Style: A Guide to Vocal Performance Practices*, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 266 267.

distinguished themselves by an elaborate sense of style as well as by bold and mischievous behavior. The *Tonadillas en estilo antiguo* by Granados are an effort to give musical expression to the scenes and characters illustrated in the paintings and sketches of Goya.²⁰ The range of mood in these songs is varied: passionate, despairing, coy and teasing. The guitar, which has a long-standing tradition of being the natural accompanying instrument of the Spanish people, is supplanted by the piano which becomes an almost equal partner with the voice in Granados's compositions. Thus, the songs of Granados are the first in the Spanish song repertoire where the piano is permitted to enter into an important role in its own right — a long-established tradition in the remainder of Europe.²¹ Skillfully capturing the heart of Spain and Goya's depictions, the *tonadillas* are a nostalgic evocation of the working-class neighborhoods of nineteenth-century Madrid, uniting brilliant and varied accompaniments evocative of quintessential guitar figurations with melodies firmly rooted in the Spanish tradition. The accurate interpretation of these pieces requires a foreknowledge of Granados's desire to evoke a sense of controlled dignity and pride and a feeling for the "...complicated etiquette and flirtation of eighteenth-century Madrid."²² The song, "Amor y Odio" ("Love and Hate") creates a juxtaposition of both sentiments through the use of major and minor tonal centers. The text is set with a rhythmic flow in both the piano and vocal line. The interplay of both slurred and detached articulations found in the accompaniment also serve to personify the contrasting sentiments.

Distinct guitar articulations are also captured skillfully in the song, "El tra-la-la y el punteado" wherein the accompaniment displays a downward flourishing figuration mimicking a plucked guitar scale after the vocal iterations of the "tra la-las," which captures the feisty manner

²⁰ Gilbert Chase, *The Music of Spain*, New York: Dover Publications, 1959, 161.

²¹ Kimball, *Song: A Guide*, 499.

²² Jacqueline Cockburn and Richard Stokes, *The Spanish Song Companion*, London: St. Edmundsbury Press, 1992, 15.

in which the *maja* responds to her *majo* when she does not want to answer his probing questions. In the final song, “El Majo Discreto,” the *maja* admits that her *majo* may be ugly, but on the other hand possesses other redeeming qualities, including keeping her secrets. The piano introduction consists of octave arpeggios that utilize a wide range of the instrument followed by a playful waltz that introduces the vocal line. The text of this piece is charming, playful, and highlighted by the articulations of the accompaniment in highly effective ways.

The music of the *bel canto* era was written to exemplify the traditional Italian vocal model which embodied an impeccable legato, seamless vocal timbre, and exquisite vocal tone – a style and practice which was crystalized during the nineteenth century. Thus, the music was characterized by beautiful singing and heightened expressivity through the employment of tasteful and brilliant ornamentation, incorporation of cadenzas, a liquid legato line, and the expressive use of the Italian language. *Bel canto* composers Vincenzo Bellini, Gaetano Donizetti, and Gioachino Rossini are most notably recognized for their significant and lasting contributions to opera; however, all three composers display a similar penchant for gorgeous melodies and expressive use of text in their song compositions.

In comparison to his contemporaries, Donizetti’s song compositions were thought to be less demonstrative of a sophisticated marriage of mood and music. However, “Amore e morte” is a fine example of the simplicity, yet utter beauty that can be found in his music. This song utilizes the metaphor of a flower to symbolize the hopeful and passionate beginning of love as well as its bittersweet ending in death. A dying man gifts a wilted flower to his beloved, Elvira — the same flower that he stole from her heart the day he fell in love with her. The duality of loss and sorrow, hope and happiness is epitomized by the minor and major juxtaposition of

tonality which Donizetti's utilizes in this song, painting a nostalgic and heart-wrenching picture of love and loss.

The emotional content and mood of Bellini's songs are often described as inextricably linked, which can be seen in both "L'abbandono" and "Vanne, o rosa fortunata." Bellini earned the name, *filosofico* ("philosophical"), by his contemporaries because of his incredible facility to compose music that exhibits the beauty of the *bel canto* melodies while maintaining a close relationship between text and music. "L'abbandono" begins with a dramatic piano introduction that embodies the quiet rustling of the breezes while still acting as an expressive precursor to the longing and pain that will be expressed in ensuing short recitative and aria. In "Vanne, o rosa fortunata," Bellini captures the whimsical and amorous text with a lilting, barcarole-like feel in the piano accompaniment, as well as with the tasteful grace notes and turns that embellish the vocal line. This is a light-hearted song in which the singer expresses her jealousy toward a rose that is placed on her beloved's bosom, but the flower itself also ironically dies of despair at her beauty.

Although it is undeniable that both Donizetti and Bellini created a *bel canto* style of their own and contributed significantly to the genre, neither experienced the artistic influence, wealth, success, and notoriety of Rossini. During his lifetime, he composed an abundance of beautiful music in both the operatic and art songs idioms, all of which display his ability to blend excellent dramatic and expressive content highlighted by melodious and rhythmic elements. His songs are charming in character and capture the essence of the emotion and nuance of the text. The song "L'invito" is a romantic and passionate declaration of love by Eloisa to her beloved Ruggiero. Rossini sets this piece in the style of a Spanish *bolero*, imbuing the song with an appealing sensuality and flavor. There are two contrasting eight-measure sections flanking the repetition of

the refrain wherein the music departs from the seductive *bolero* rhythms, incorporating an arpeggiated gesture played in sixths expressing Eloisa's naïve plea of longing to her beloved. "La Partenza" is a song of painful farewell. The music exhibits both ascending and descending sweeping, expansive musical gestures, highlighting yearning and pain. Both the vocal line and the accompaniment are replete with downward tilting gestures and descending grace notes, which embody the uncertainty that the singer feels as she wonders if the love that was so special to her will become merely a distant memory for her beloved.

Giuseppe Verdi was considered amongst many to be the greatest Italian musical dramatist. Throughout his lengthy career Verdi is thought to have revitalized Italian music by providing it with an authentic cultural identity as strong as that created for German music by Wagner.²³ At the time Verdi rose to popularity, Bellini had passed, Donizetti was dying, and Rossini was in retirement. It was a fortuitous time for Verdi to forge a path for Italian music as the illustrious careers of three *bel canto era* composers were ending, placing Verdi in a unique position to carry Italian music forward in a new direction. In addition, Verdi and his musical language came to be recognized as a symbol for the reunification of Italy in the aftermath of the division created by the Napoleonic wars. His composition style, although influenced by his predecessors, was uniquely his own. The form of his operatic compositions evolved from the divided scenes and acts of the classical and *bel canto* eras to a more continuous, through-composed model. Verdi's gift of drama and melody is personified in the song, "Perduta ho la pace." The text is an Italian translation by poet Luigi Balestri from the story of Gretchen at the spinning wheel from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust*, the text of which was also famously set by Franz Schubert in the song "Gretchen am Spinnrade." A repeated vocal phrase

²³ Matthew Boyden, *A Rough Guide to Opera*, London: Rough Guide Ltd, 2002, 213.

accompanied by strong, detached chords personifies the loss of peace, and feelings of anxiety that Gretchen is experiencing. The moments of heightened intensity and climax wherein Gretchen is lost in memories of her lover's gaze and kiss are marked by a more agitated atmosphere with increased activity and motion in the piano figuration as well as in the vocal line.²⁴

Miguel Sandoval was a Guatemalan-American pianist, conductor, and composer. He began playing the piano at the age of ten and became a skilled pianist. He attended school first in Guatemala and eventually traveled to the United States in 1919, becoming a U.S. citizen in 1925. While living in New York City, Sandoval worked as an arranger, choral coach, and pianist in a theatre circuit while also playing piano in small theatres and nightclubs on the side. With the help of several high-profile contacts, he secured a position as assistant conductor at the Metropolitan Opera and held the post for two seasons. In addition, he became an accompanist for accomplished performers including Carmen Ponselle and Italian tenor Beniamino Gigli, with whom he toured extensively for many years. He composed several pieces for Gigli, which they performed while touring 48 states in the U.S. and Havana, Cuba. Sandoval's compositional output includes art song, popular Spanish song, piano works, orchestral compositions including dances and tone poems, and choral arrangements. His compositional style represented his interest in and affinity for Spanish popular music, Latin American music, and folk idioms. He often combined various styles into his compositions, infusing them with the ... "stylized Spanish traditional popular idioms and rhythms in his own fashion," often employing traditional Spanish dance forms including the *seguidilla*, *paso-doble*, and the *jota*. The captivating and charming song "Sin tu amor" combines a variety of quintessential characteristics of the Spanish popular

²⁴ Kimball, *Song: A Guide*, 432.

idiom including the eighteenth-century *bolero* reflected in the accompaniment and exemplified in the syncopated figures that evoke the strumming of a guitar. The text of the initial section is one of pleading and passion. The B section incorporates a change of character and is firmly rooted in a major melody and tonality. The syncopated rhythms amongst the left and right hand of the piano are representative of the *bolero* rhythm and signify hope and joy which culminate in the sheer adoration of the beloved. As described by author Polyana T Schroeder, “Sandoval continues the tradition established by Spanish composer Manuel de Falla of taking traditional models of folk song from various regions of Spain, providing them with brilliant pianistic accompaniments while adhering to the original spirit of the melodies.”²⁵ This aptly describes the style and atmosphere of the song “Sin tu amor,” which combines distinct Spanish popular idioms and a lively and virtuosic piano accompaniment with a uniquely Spanish melody, resulting in a charming, enrapturing piece of vocal music.

²⁵ Pollyanna T. Schroeder, *Miguel Sandoval Guatemalan-American Composer: A Chronological Catalogue of His Collected Works*, American University, 1976, <https://proxy.lib.umich.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/docview/302804628?accountid=14667>, 77.

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OPERA ROLE: Händel's *Alcina*

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The most excellent musician any age ever produced: whose compositions were a sentimental language rather than mere sounds; and surpassed the power of words in expressing the various passions of the human heart.

– Anonymous

The story of Handel's *Alcina* is an epic and magical tale of heroism, love, the pursuit of happiness, and the annihilation of evil. Yet, even with its elements of spectacle and otherworldliness, the impact of the story lies most importantly in the honest depiction of human emotion as exemplified through the music—music that itself embodies the framework of the narrative. The Handelian aria has been typified as an "...idealization of one of the passions of the human heart..."²⁶ The preferred aesthetic of the eighteenth-century generalized emotions and intellect. Thus, the approach to art, be it words or music, was to portray thoughts as a summation of ideas rather than to express singular or idiosyncratic views. Handel possessed a unique ability to create music that expresses emotion in keeping with these ideals, while still achieving evocative nuance and poignancy. This analysis will examine and explore the text and musical devices utilized by Handel in five arias sung by the title character Alcina, specifically, "Di, cor mio," "Sì, son quella," "Ah! mio cor!," "Ah! Ruggiero crudel...Ombre pallide," and "Mi restano le lagrime." The musical fabric of each aria weaves together the emotional framework of the character revealing a successive and ever unraveling glimpse into Alcina's psychological journey and the events that lead to her demise.

²⁶Gary Schmiggall, *Literature as Opera* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 36.

Alcina is an *opera seria* in three acts composed by George Frideric Handel. The text was taken directly from the libretto of the opera *L'isola d'Alcina*, composed by Riccardo Broschi in Rome in 1728. The story is based upon Ludovico Ariosto's epic verse, *Orlando Furioso*, which is also the subject matter for two other operas written by Handel, *Orlando* and *Ariodante*. The opera premiered in the theatre at Covent Garden on April 16, 1735. This was Handel's first season presenting his operas at this recently built theatre. Prior to this, Handel was mounting his productions at the Haymarket Theatre, also known as the King's Theatre. However, his perceived monopoly on the creation and performance of Italian opera in London and the king's support of his endeavors led to rising tension and disagreements among the aristocracy. As a result, the aristocracy started a new opera company, The Opera of the Nobility, eventually forcing Handel to relinquish control to his new rival. Nevertheless, *Alcina*'s premiere was extremely well-received and earned Handel continued success, enjoying seventeen repeat performances before the end of the season.²⁷

Alcina is a sorceress who with her magical powers creates a magnificent island of grandeur, opulence, and sensual pleasure. Together with her supernatural abilities, she possesses an irresistible sexual magnetism which enables her to lure men and use them for her pleasure, only to transform them into stones, trees, and wild beasts when she has tired of them.²⁸ The warrior Ruggiero has landed on the island and has succumbed to Alcina's spell, forsaking his duty and his fiancée Bradamante. Bradamante, disguised as her own brother Ricciardo, sets out to save Ruggiero alongside her tutor Melisso. They bring with them an enchanted ring that will reveal truth to whomever wears it, breaking Alcina's stronghold on Ruggiero and freeing her

²⁷ Hicks, Anthony. "Handel [Händel, Hendel], George Frideric." *Grove Music Online*. 2001. Accessed January 29, 2020.

²⁸ David Kimbell, *Handel on the Stage*, (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 151.

other captives. The principal narrative of the opera consists of a series of attempts by Melisso, Bradamanate, and Oronte, the commander of Alcina's forces, to earn Ruggiero's trust and to help him find the truth and break the spell. Ruggiero is eventually convinced and wears the enchanted ring given to him by Melisso, after which he sees the island for what it truly is – a dark and barren wasteland. Ruggiero and his comrades overthrow Alcina and restore the prisoners to their human forms, thereby destroying the island and its magical powers along with Alcina's reign.²⁹⁻³⁰

We first encounter the sorceress Alcina in Act I, seen in glorious grandeur and opulence on her throne in her magnificent kingdom. Ruggiero, who is clearly overcome with infatuation for Alcina, is kneeling at her side and holding a mirror so that she can glimpse at her beautiful reflection. The shipwrecked guests, the warrior Bradamante (disguised as Ricciardo), and her former tutor Melisso have entered and are in awe of the grandeur of their surroundings. During the first recitative, they announce their presence and request to stay on the island until the seas have calmed. Alcina is more than happy to oblige and assures her guests that it would be her pleasure to house them on the island. Alcina uses her next utterance as an opportunity to flaunt her stronghold on Ruggiero by instructing him to show the guests the palace, the woods, and the fountains – all of the places where they discovered and consummated their love. The aria “Di cor mio” immediately follows the recitative and serves as a continuation of her assertion of control and dominion over all people, the landscape, and most importantly Ruggiero. The aria begins in Bb major and is replete with gallant, dotted figures in the continuo and the strings, as illustrated in Figure 1, which create an atmosphere of regality and elegance.

²⁹ “Handel House - Handel's Operas: Alcina,” Handel and Hendrix, accessed February 21, 2020, <https://handelhendrix.org/learn/about-handel/opera-synopses/alcina/>).

³⁰ Georg Friedrich Händel, *Alcina: Drame per musica in tre atti, HWV 34*, Hallische Händel-Ausgabe, Serie II: Opern, Band 33, 1997, VI.

Figure 1. Excerpt from “Di cor mio,” m. 1-2

22 *Andante larghetto.*

Violino I.
Oboe I.
Violino II.
Oboe II.
Viola.
ALCINA.
Bassi.
Pianoforte.

It is important to note that this is the only aria that Alcina sings in a major key (with the exception of the B section of her final aria, “Mi restano le lagrime”), which is indicative of the steady decline that Alcina experiences throughout the opera. The text and music of “Di cor mio” uses innuendo in subtle, yet suggestive ways and is charged with sexual content. A clear example of this is the line where she exclaims, “...where I fell silent and sighed before begging you to have pity on me.” This suggestive sexual language is housed in an elegant, noble bass line and sighing gestures in the strings. The apex of the musical phrase arrives on a half note on the word *merce* (“mercy”) and is followed by a descending melismatic passage, which eventually rises and culminates on the repetition of the word *merce*. This is the first extended melisma in the aria and it embodies the passionate tryst that Alcina is recounting. It is as if she is purposefully reliving their experience not only for shock value, but also to continue to display her control over

Ruggiero. It is interesting to note that the control she wishes to exude is exemplified in the musical structure. As expressed by Todd Michael Borgerding in his book on gender and sexuality in early music, the stability or instability of the harmony, its predictability or lack thereof, and the manner in which the vocal line functions within this structure can function as “barometers of musical control.”³¹ Thus, the function of the vocal line and harmonic implications of an aria can often contribute to its expressivity and can strongly influence the perception of the character. In this case, the aria’s structure conveys a sense of elegance, control, and confidence in several specific ways. For example, the key center has remained stable throughout, following a diatonic harmonic structure and employing predictable harmonic progressions and cadential arrivals, evoking a collected and confident demeanor. The material used in the opening *ritornello* is essentially the same as the material of the first vocal statement and these gestures continue to be repeated throughout the aria, reinforcing the principal musical motives. The listener is never aurally jarred or derailed because the structure of the aria has not subverted their musical expectations. The musical predictability and stability of its structure serves to maintain the impression of control. The second thematic idea of the A section begins in the dominant, a predictable and closely related key area. The text of the A section is repeated, although the declamations are shorter, almost breathless, and the melody contains more melismatic flourishes. The harmonic rhythm continues to increase in juxtaposition with the shorter phrase lengths and the musical gestures are infused with more sensuality. Namely, there are a series of rising, lilting sixteenth-note sighing gestures on the word *sospirai* (“I sighed”), which begin in the strings and are repeated in the vocal line. The rising gestures, as seen Figure 2, are repeated three times with

³¹ Todd Michael Borgerding, *Gender, Sexuality, and Early Music* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 94.

each iteration beginning a step higher than the previous, creating a sense of heightened anticipation.

Figure 2. Excerpt from “Di cor mio,” m. 26-29

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The musical score is for a vocal and piano piece. It consists of five staves. The top two staves are for the vocal line, and the bottom three are for the piano accompaniment. The key signature is G minor (three flats). The tempo is marked 'Allegretto'. The lyrics are in Italian and German. The vocal line begins with the lyrics 'ra, i, e so spi, rai, seufte, sehnend seuf' and ends with 'zte,'. The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some chords and rests.

ra, i, e so spi, rai,
seufte, sehnend seuf

zte,

The contrasting middle section of this aria provides a more intimate and sensual text. Alcina is openly illustrating the intense and passionate connection that exists between her and Ruggiero, which is centered around the theme of the lover’s gaze. Specifically, when Alcina expresses “mi dicesti con un sguardo: peno ed ardo al par di te” (“you communicated with one look: I suffer and burn just like you.”), she uses language that describes an intense emotional connection. This section is in the relative key of G minor, which provides a more colorful palette of harmonic and melodic colors to help depict this intimate love scene that Alcina is now reliving, rather than merely recounting. The text is deeply personal and suggests that she loses awareness of the people around her revealing thoughts and emotions she would not have otherwise openly expressed. Quarter-note *appoggiaturas* emphasize the words “peno ed ardo”

(“suffer and burn”) masterfully painting the text with a sensual yearning. It is also interesting to note that the vocal line, both rhythmically and melodically, changes considerably in the B section. The vocal line is much more expansive in range as the melody reaches the highest note of Ab5. The melodic contour also loses its more compact intervallic movement and becomes more angular, reaching a surprising leap of an ascending major seventh. The aforementioned characteristics suggest a change in demeanor and composure. She has lost herself in memories so much that she relinquishes control, quite literally, of the diatonic structure and the confines of her own melody. The returning musical material of the A section provides her the opportunity to regain her composure in front of her guests reminding them that Ruggiero is completely overtaken by her every word, move, and gaze. The sole purpose of this aria is to convey Alcina’s power and influence, and the use of the text and musical devices express a variety of distinct emotions including smug confidence, narcissism, and voyeuristic sexuality within the context of one overarching emotion: sheer dominance.

The struggles begin as the people who surround Alcina attempt to undermine her influence. Oronte, the commander of Alcina’s troops and her trusted confidant, has approached Ruggiero and tells him that he is a fool if he thinks that Alcina will be faithful to him, suggesting that she already has her sights set on Ricciardo. Oronte’s accusations manage to shake Ruggiero’s faith in Alcina’s constancy and love and he confronts her in the recitatives immediately preceding her second aria, :*Si, son quella*” (“Yes, I am that one”). In a jealous rage, he refers to Alcina as unfaithful, cruel, and incapable of true love. Alcina, completely stunned by his accusations and taken aback by his allegations, is at once deeply hurt and offended. The vocal line of her recitative supports this trajectory of emotions. Her initial melody, characterized by ascending and descending perfect fourth and fifths, gradually rises in pitch as she becomes more

agitated, culminating in a leap of a perfect fourth up to a G5 as she inquires angrily, “Chiami Alcina infedele?” (“you call Alcina unfaithful?”). Ruggiero is unwavering in his accusations and continues to spew jealous claims. She responds exclaiming, “...your jealousy offends me...” and then seemingly softens saying, “but I like you still.” Their conversation is interrupted as Ricciardo himself is announced and enters gushing with compliments about Alcina’s palace and her beauty. Although this intrusion is untimely given their current argument, Alcina uses this opportunity to show her commitment to Ruggiero by saying that she is beautiful only for him. Untrusting, Ruggiero insists that Ricciardo depart immediately, but Alcina intervenes saying that Ricciardo and his guest should wait until the seas have calmed and it is safe to travel. Ruggiero’s jealousy mounts as he believes she wants to keep him on the island because she is smitten with him. Alcina is overcome with sadness and anger that Ruggiero would doubt her faithfulness. She assures him that she has not changed and she is still true to him. The climbing tension of these events fuels the aria, “Si, son quella” (“Yes, I am still she”). The aria begins in the key of A minor and is accompanied only by continuo throughout the entire aria – an ideal setting for conveying vulnerability. The orchestra’s role is limited to only playing a postlude after the primary section consisting of continuo, oboe, and strings. Alcina’s entrance is unaccompanied, following a solitary and solemn tonic chord. The aria’s melody is completely exposed by the sparse texture of the accompaniment and the bass line carries an emotionally laden sighing gesture personifying the heaviness of Alcina’s heart, as illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Excerpt from “Si, son quella,” m. 1-5.

Andante larghetto.

ALCINA. *Si: son quel - la! non più bel - la,*
Ja, die Glei - che! doch nicht schön mehr,

Bassi.

Pianoforte.

As a performer and singer, one is painfully aware of the lack of support and bare, unprotected environment of the opening lines, thereby organically instilling a sense of apprehension and anxiety which serves the character's feelings of disquiet and uneasiness. The text of the opening line states, "Yes, I am still she, no longer beautiful, no longer dear to your eyes." She proceeds to say, "if you no longer wish to love me, please do not hate me." The text of the A section is deeply indicative of her overarching feelings of pain and helplessness. The tessitura of the vocal line rises often to accentuate the poignancy of the word "hate." The ending phrases climb to a tessitura that consistently remains in the secondo passaggio for extended measures, culminating on an A5, and raising the level of vocal intensity and the delivery of the emotions. The contrasting middle section reveals a rapid resurgence of Alcina's anger and power characterized by an abrupt modulation from A minor to E major. As her anger and pain rise, she tells Ruggiero to ask her eyes and her words if she is indeed still true, and to tell it to his ungrateful, lying heart that wishes to reproach her. This section has offered an opportunity to show a distinct facet of Alcina's typical emotional trajectory – one that is common among

Handel's operatic heroines. We often see a character's strength weakened or transformed by love into feelings of empathy, pain, sadness, or dejection. However, as is the case for Alcina, the alteration is not permanent, thus, the contrasting middle section provides an opportunity for the character's strength and power to resurface through anger, resilience, determination, or even arrogance. Alcina is always concerned with being in complete control – in control of others, especially the men whom she has ensnared, and in control of her own emotions. This moment is the first time in the opera where we see her stronghold on others (and on herself) compromised, even momentarily, as exemplified in the principal material. Nonetheless, as she becomes angrier, she berates Ruggiero, touting passive-aggressive insults and accusations and resorting to calculated manipulation. However, she is still confronted with the task to prove her love and to regain Ruggiero's trust. Thus, she strategically changes course and harnesses her powers of seduction and sensuality with the return of the principal material. The *da capo aria* provides the opportunity to show a trajectory of psychological stages by infusing identical musical gestures with distinct energy and emotion. The music and text of the A section does not lose its vulnerability; however, Alcina can utilize this vulnerable energy in a different, perhaps more sensual manner. She has allowed herself to become angry and accusatory and she must quickly regain her composure; therefore, she must engage her powerful allure to reawaken Ruggiero's desire for her. During the B section, she has learned something valuable by allowing herself to process her own emotions, and in so doing has also observed Ruggiero's reactions. She must realize that she is reaching him on some level, thus, she uses the return of the original material to feign sadness, vulnerability, and pain. Furthermore, it is interesting to note the text of Alcina's arias has persistently mentioned her gaze. Therefore, it would be safe to surmise that Alcina's

power is significantly derived from her ability to look into the eyes of her subjects, thus, her proximity to Ruggiero and the intensity of her gaze carries with it extreme swaying power.

Alcina's Act II aria, "Ah! Mio cor," is perhaps the most well-known music in the opera. It is a heart-wrenchingly beautiful aria that expresses conflicting, yet intensely counterpoised emotions.³² Ruggiero has expressed that he feels unrest and wishes to go hunting in an effort to revive his spirits. Alcina is suspicious of this behavior, yet reluctantly allows him to leave, requesting that he return to her quickly. Soon after, Oronte arrives and tells Alcina that she has been deceived and betrayed by Ruggiero and her guests. She realizes that Ruggiero is trying to escape and his request to go hunting is an elaborate story meant to deceive her.irate, she vows vengeance upon them all. The aria is accompanied by continuo and strings and consists of repeated eighth note "stabbing" gestures on each beat like steady, sharp jabs of pain. This persistent, penetrating motive, as illustrated in Figure 3, appears throughout the A section of the aria, relentlessly slicing through the texture and representing the pain that Alcina feels as she processes her emotions. There is a degree of integrity in this scene since it is the very first time that we see Alcina expressing her thoughts while alone. Alcina is understood to be a disingenuous and unscrupulous character, therefore, it is highly unlikely that the audience would ever see her true self revealed in the presence of others. Now alone and undisturbed, her genuine and innermost thoughts and feelings can emerge.

³² Schmigdall, *Literature as Opera*, 60.

Figure 4. Excerpt from “Ah! mio cor,” m. 1-7.

Furthermore, the manner in which a character deals with adversity, or in this case, betrayal, provides perhaps the most salient barometer of a character’s moral fiber. The long, opening ritornello ends on the tonic in the key of C minor. Alcina’s entrance is completely unaccompanied as she exclaims, “Ah, mio cor!” (“Oh, my heart!”), at which point the orchestra re-enters with the persistent piercing gesture that accompanies the entirety of the principal material. Feeling scorned, Alcina beckons the stars and the god of love in anguish. We hear her admit that she loves Ruggiero as she states, “t’amo tanto...puoi lasciarmi sola in pianto, O Dei, perché?” (“I love you so much...how can you leave me abandoned in tears...Oh Gods, why?”). This declaration is significant. Based upon what we have been shown thus far, we may assume that she is incapable of genuine feelings of love. Her entire character is based upon her self-centered need to control and use men, only to toss them to the sidelines when she is finished with them. This admission of love and the sheer pain that is embodied in the musical gestures of this

aria shows us that her experience with Ruggiero may be different in some way. She is invested. She is in love...but how and why? At this moment, Alcina is asking herself these very same questions. This aria is a soliloquy throughout which she spans a range of foreign emotions that she is unable to process. Musically, the orchestra is rich with colors employing frequent and often abrupt changes in harmony, including diminished chords and cycling through secondary dominant harmony. This kaleidoscope of changing harmonic colors reveals the surge of everchanging emotions and psychological turmoil with which Alcina is grappling. The contrasting middle section modulates to E-flat, the relative major. Similar to the previous aria, this section brings about a resurgence of energy and confidence. Referring to herself in third person, she arrogantly asks, “Ma, che fa gemendo Alcina?” (But, why should Alcina lament?). The entire B section is an ostentatious exercise in re-building her own self-confidence. She continually reminds herself that she is a queen, that she has not run out of time and power to punish those who have betrayed her, and that they will suffer at her hand. The strings in the orchestra have a driving, rhythmically charged gesture that acts as the musical embodiment of her motivation, as illustrated in Figure 4. As her energy reaches its pinnacle at the end of the B section, she pauses only momentarily, feeling the resurgence of the love and pain that began this aria. Therefore, the strength she was able to derive from the middle section has been arrested by her true feelings. Her heart has betrayed her and she finds herself once again where she began – in utter disappointment and searing pain. Thus, the end of the middle section continues seamlessly into the return of the principal section omitting the opening *ritornello*, and beginning with the unaccompanied voice repeating the words “Ah, mio cor.”

Figure 5. Excerpt from “Ah! mio cor,” m. 102-105.

Allegro. Violini unis.

p

Ma, che fa gemen-do Al-ci-na? Son re-i-na, e tem-po an-co-ra:
Doch, warum verzagt Al-ci-na? Ich bin Für-stin! will er entwei-chen,

mp

The stabbing gestures return to remind her of the intense pain and completely foreign feelings of love that she is experiencing. Although she has attempted to regain her strength by reminding herself of the possibilities of her own influence, she now finds herself haunted by her amorous feelings. By the end of the aria, Alcina feels completely depleted and emotionally exhausted from the expansive scope of emotion she has traversed in this scene.

As aptly described by author Tom Borgerding in *Gender, Sexuality, and Early Music*,

“...the harmonic juxtapositions, chromaticism, dissonance, affective use of rhythm, and rhetorical figures that characterize the most expressive recitative typically coincide with those moments during which a character possesses the least self-control, not only mirroring immoderation but helping to construct it.”³³

It is certainly fitting that Handel writes an unrestrained *recitative accompagnato* to demonstrate Alcina’s failed attempts to harness her magic powers as depicted in the Act II *scena* “Ah! Ruggiero crudel...Ombre pallide.” Alcina is alone in a subterranean cave containing of all her

³³ Borgerding, *Gender, Sexuality and Early Music*, 94.

magical instruments. She has just learned that Ruggiero and Bradamante have been reunited and plan to flee the island together. In a fit of desperation, she storms to her magical chamber to summon the spirits to prevent his departure, but her attempts are thwarted since Ruggiero is now protected by the magic of the ring. The *recitativo accompagnato* begins in the key of B minor cycling rather quickly through various key centers and cadences, many of which are distantly related to the primary key center, including D major, C# minor, and the parallel major. The recitative is structured as a mad scene wherein Alcina has completely lost control in a fit of frustration and anguish. It is the second aria where Alcina is completely alone, but the first where we see her completely lose control of her mental state and of her composure. She begins by cursing Ruggiero's cruelty and betrayal as she cries, "Ah! Ruggiero crudel, tu no m'amasti. Ah! che fingesti amor e m'ingannasti" ("Oh, Ruggiero, cruel one, you did not love me. Oh, you feigned your affections and you have betrayed me"). She is then immediately struck by conflicting emotions, remembering her love for Ruggiero, as she exclaims "e pur ti adoro ancor" ("and yet, I love you still"). There is an abrupt shift to a B major chord, which masterfully paints the surprising feeling of affection that surfaces amidst her jealousy and anger. Her anger quickly reignited, she calls upon the dark spirits of the night to come to her aid, yet there is no response. It seems her magic has been rendered useless and the spirits are concealing themselves. Handel fittingly portrays this lack of response from the spirits by silencing the orchestra, as shown in Figure 5. All of her frenzied exclamations, doubled only by a few violins, evaporate into a void where she can only hear the echo of her own voice reverberating through the cave – a masterful and effective musical device. Alcina's desperation mounts with each failed attempt to summon the spirits. The vocal line traverses an incredible span of range and tessitura in a very short time, encompassing the leap of an ascending major tenth (E4 – G#5) in only two measures, after which

the vocal line plummets to a C#4, as illustrated in Figure 5. The entire *recitativo* is an intricate and entrancing mad scene in which Alcina realizes that she has been betrayed by not only Ruggiero, but by her magic as well – the source of her control. The music, both the acrobatic vocal line and the meandering key centers explored throughout, skillfully embody Alcina’s turmoil and fury and vividly embody her frenzied cries. The aria that ensues, “Ombre pallide,” is in the key of E minor and is accompanied by winding, twisting motives in the orchestra that are also found in the vocal line. The snaking melismatic passages imbue a sense of insidiousness, while also demonstrating the spirits’ evading Alcina’s grasp, as illustrated in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Excerpt from recitativo accompagnato, “Ah! Ruggiero crudel,” m. 27-34.

27

(sdegnata)
(zornig)

-dan-za? Eh! Non m'u-di-te? Vi cer-co, e v'a-scon-de-te?
lan-ge? Wie, ihr ge-horcht nicht? Ich ruf' euch, und ihr ver-bergt euch?

31

(infurata)
(rasend)

Vi co-man-do, e ta-ce-te? Ev-vi in-gan-no?
Ich be-fehl' euch, und ihr schwei-get? Täuscht auch ihr mich

Figure 7. Excerpt from “Ombre pallide,” m. 28-31.



After she has exhausted all efforts in vain, she departs, irately, discarding her magic wand in exasperation. This scene is by far the most energetically driven, aurally and visually brilliant, and threateningly sinister scene in the entire opera. It is an essential link in the portrayal of Alcina’s rapid decline.

Alcina’s final aria appears in Act III and is an embodiment of her dejection and isolation. At this point in the story, Ruggiero has successfully freed himself from Alcina’s stronghold and she is left with nothing but tears, misery, and a desire to drown herself in sorrow. “Mi restano le lagrime” (“I am left only with my tears”) is a lament in the key of F# minor in 12/8 and accompanied by a sorrowful, yet lilting dance-like rhythm in the orchestra. The vocal line rises up a major-sixth to G5 when Alcina exclaims, “e non m’ascolta il ciel” (“and the heavens do not hear me”) to signify her anguished cry. Alcina has completely lost all conviction and hope and has truly surrendered to the impending doom. This is the first and only moment where we see Alcina resigning to her cruel fate without contempt and without placing blame or vowing vengeance upon others. She is admitting that her own behavior has made the gods cruel and ruthless, a striking similarity to her own character. The contrasting middle section begins in the

key of F# major, which as mentioned previously is the only other instance that Alcina sings an aria in a major key other than in the first, “Di cor mio.” There is, however, a striking difference in the function of the major tonality amongst the two arias. In this section, Alcina is so desperate to end her own suffering that she wishes she could disappear into the waves of the ocean or use her own magic to turn herself into stone. The shift to a major tonality after the lilting minor lament, in addition to Alcina’s allusions to suicide in the text of this section, make this optimistic color change a very eerie and disconcerting one. Alcina realizes that she has been rendered so powerless that she cannot even punish herself and thereafter, has no choice but to mournfully return to the original material. Handel accomplishes this inevitable return by writing a truncated *ritornello* that is similar to the opening material to aid the transition back to the original key of F# minor. For the remainder of the opera, Alcina is faced with a consistent downward spiral until her eventual demise which comes at the hand of Ruggiero. The final stage of her destruction begins as both Bradamante and Ruggiero decide that they need to destroy the source of Alcina's magic, represented as an urn. Alcina pleads with them, renouncing any ill and claiming that she only wishes for their happiness, but her petitions fall on deaf ears and Ruggiero shatters the urn. Alcina’s magical island disintegrates and she sinks into the ground, forgotten forever. With her reign of manipulation and evil ended, Alcina’s victims are restored to their human forms and are set free.

Alcina is at the core an intensely human, albeit uniquely flawed character who experiences a wide array of emotions before her inevitable demise. Each aria throughout the course of the opera creates an entire picture of Alcina’s character. The music that Handel has created shows an incredibly masterful marriage of text and music that expresses a clear psychological journey. Although the story and main character are intertwined with the

supernatural and otherworldly, Handel's captivating music infuses an extraordinary, magical woman with a truly human character – one who endures life struggles not so far from the real and ordinary. The ability for the audience to be enveloped in Ariosto's magical world while concurrently empathizing with the heartrending emotions of this unscrupulous character is inspired in no small part by Handel's remarkably compelling and moving music.

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